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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0902  
INFO RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 2865  
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 2288  
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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TH](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: KAREN NATIONAL UNION AND KAREN NATIONAL LIBERATION  
ARMY ACTIVITIES IN REFUGEE CAMPS IN THAILAND

REF: A. BANGKOK 3948

[1](#)B. RANGOON 925

[1](#)C. CHIANG MAI 110

[1](#)D. STATE 107330

Classified By: POLITICAL OFFICER MARK LAMBERT, REASON 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (C) This message is intended to supplement Ref a, which was a response to Ref d request for information about Karen National Union (KNU) and Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) activities in refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. The information in this message was recently provided by UNHCR and UNHCR requests that the information be handled carefully.

[1](#)2. (C) As stated in ref a, the Karen camp committees, which are influenced by the KNU, have traditionally been responsible for the administration of justice in the camps, though UNHCR has begun to assume a larger role in this area. UNHCR documents state that these justice systems apply some procedures, penalties, and remedies that are not in conformity with Thai law nor international human rights standards. In addition, these systems are politicised and not impartial given the KNU's influence with the camp committees. They also do not give sufficient attention to the rights of women. For example, at the direction of the KNU, persons have been detained without due process and criminal punishments have not been carried out due to the position of the person who committed the crime.

[1](#)3. (C) A UNHCR Field Office has received reports of four executions in the camps in the past three years carried out at the direction of the KNU. One of the reasons apparently was suspicion that the persons were spies or traitors. The families of those executed were placed under pressure by the KNU not to report to the Thai police or UNHCR. UNHCR believes that these types of actions are intimidating to other refugees in the camps.

[1](#)4. (C) UNHCR states that there is anecdotal information, difficult to document, of KNU recruitment of child soldiers in the camps. Following a study of the issue, UNHCR learned of isolated cases in several camps, but has no information on systematic recruitment.

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